

2013 LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Rasu Ramachandran

The Lifetime Contribution Award is designed to honour a retired librarian who has significantly contributed to the development of the library profession in Singapore and who has represented Singapore on an international level. The person must also have had a strong relationship with LAS and been actively involved in LAS over the span of his/her career. This is an award given to deserving members only when the Council identifies a worthy winner. This year's recipient is Rasu Ramachandran, who magnificently fulfills all of the above mentioned criteria.

Mr. Rama is a very passionate and committed librarian and leader who for nearly four decades has played a crucial role in the transformation and modernization of the library system in Singapore and the rest of Asia.

In his career at the National Library, which began as a Library Officer in 1969, Mr. Rama moved into senior roles in most key Divisions including Education Officer, Staff Development and Welfare Officer, Branch Head, Assistant Director of Technical Services, Deputy Director of Reference and Support Services, Director of the National Library and ultimately Deputy Chief Executive of the National Library Board.

As his career progressed he was involved in many of the boldest and most exciting initiatives in the National Library's history which have profoundly changed Singapore's library system. In the early years, he was instrumental in obtaining funding and training programs for librarians and library assistants and taking library services to the heartlands through a nation-wide system of branch libraries. He played a critical role in drafting the National Library Board Act 1995 which paved the way for establishing NLB. He was also a member of the Library 2000 Committee which reviewed and formulated the master plan for developing library services in Singapore as well as being deeply involved in its implementation. Realising the importance of the National Library Services as different from Public Library Services Rama developed and introduced a range of National Library services including Reference Point in 1996 and InfoXpress to make information about Singapore more readily accessible. He oversaw the Asian Children's Festival, the Emerging Trends in Library and Archival Services and the World Library Summit which collectively drew the attention of outstanding Library developments in Singapore and the region to the rest of the world.

In addition to his leadership roles in the National Library, Mr. Rama was actively involved in professional organizations in and outside of Singapore. He was Editor of

Singapore Libraries, served on the Library Association of Singapore (LAS) Council for 14 years, including becoming the Library Association of Singapore's Honorary Secretary and served 8 years as LAS President with the goal of making it a more relevant, inclusive, cooperative, and dynamic organization. He has been praised for his role in mentoring a new generation of librarians at LAS and the National Library. He has also published widely in publications such as Singapore Book World, Malayan Law Journal and the UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries.

Mr. Rama made significant inroads in expanding the role of Singapore's libraries in Asia and beyond. In 2000, he was appointed the first Secretary-General of the Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians and was an ardent, untiring advocate and supporter of CONSAL's mission in Singapore and Southeast Asia and vigorously tried to lift Singapore's role on the international stage. In 2004, after retiring from the National Library he was appointed as the Secretary-General of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), one of the most important international professional library bodies. In addition, he has been Vice President of the Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA), Chairman of the Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania, and a Member of the Library Education Committee, Asia Library & Information Virtual Association (ALIVA), Indian Library Services Advisory Panel, and the International Federation for Documentation.

In 2006, after his remarkable career at NLB and contribution to library development in the region, he continued in an aligned field as he became Executive Director of the National Book Development Council of Singapore. Since becoming Executive Director he has brought the organization to a new level of achievement.

Mr. Rama's contributions to the library profession have been recognised with some of the library profession's highest honors including the CONSAL Outstanding Librarian Award in 2006, Singapore's Public Administration Medal (Silver) in 1996 and the LAS Professional Service Award in 2008.

Mr. Rama's greatest gift to the library world is the example that he has set for generations of librarians through a never say die attitude and the fervent belief that even when faced with inadequate resources, the combination of conviction, vision determination, resourcefulness, and tenacity along with fairness, inclusiveness, and good promotion, can push sound ideas and programmes to fruition.

In recognition of a lifetime of remarkable success in illuminating the role and value of libraries in Singapore and abroad through inspired and fair-minded leadership, forceful advocacy, and enduring support of libraries, librarians and their professional associations, it is a privilege to present the 2013 Library Association of Singapore's Lifetime Contribution Award to Rasu Ramachandran.

